

# Inspection of a good school: Durham Trinity School & Sports College

Dunholme Close, Aykley Heads, Durham DH1 5WB

---

Inspection dates:

11–12 February 2020

## **Outcome**

Durham Trinity School & Sports College continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy attending Durham Trinity School. Pupils told us that they really like their school and described it as 'great and fun'. They feel happy and safe here because they know that adults care about them. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils they work with. Staff are very knowledgeable about the individual pupils and this helps them to support them in a very individual way. There have been lots of changes to the way the teachers develop learning in the classrooms and this has helped pupils to develop their skills and knowledge in ways which better meets their needs. Staff make sure that the school's values of nurture, believe, thrive and succeed are the focus of all that they do. Most pupils behave very well and are proud of their school. Some pupils are being supported to develop their understanding of positive behaviour and interaction.

Staff make sure that pupils gain valuable knowledge and experience of the wider world. Pupils take part in a range of out-of-classroom activities. Pupils thrive in their personal development. They learn through real-life experiences, such as visits to the local supermarket, taking part in enterprise projects, work experience within the school or working in the school's cafe. Pupils are able to link their trips and visits to their learning in the classroom. This leads to valuable work-related learning and opportunities for future employment. Pupils feel that bullying happens at Durham Trinity only very rarely and, if it does, the staff act quickly to sort it out. Well-trained staff help pupils to cope with any anxieties they may have. All pupils across the school are treated equally.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have thought very carefully about what pupils should learn. The leaders have recently developed a three-tier curriculum which they feel better meets the needs of the pupils. They continue to develop the curriculum to best meet the needs of each individual pupil. They have high expectations about the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils need to help them to be successful in their future adult life. Leaders are working with staff, governors, parents and carers, and pupils to develop this new curriculum, which is guided by the national curriculum where the school feels it is appropriate, given

the pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers plan learning opportunities using the three-tier curriculum, selecting the tier which is best suited to the needs of the class group. Activities are then planned to meet the needs of the individual pupils.

Teachers and support staff know each pupil well. Many teachers know what to teach to build each individual pupil's skills and knowledge. Teachers and support staff help pupils to make progress in their learning and build their confidence. For example, we saw adults supporting pupils to take notes while watching a documentary, while other pupils were supported in their discussion of the documentary, using video evidence to demonstrate their understanding of the film. In another class, pupils with more complex needs were developing their understanding of giving directions, using 'position' words such as 'forwards' and 'backwards' through an art activity. Pupils with physical disability were supported to join in creatively.

Leaders are continuing to support and develop some of the curriculum planning to further improve the quality of the learning opportunities. Leaders continue to develop accreditation routes carefully considered to best meet the needs of each pupil.

We saw pupils enjoying school and the activities that they do. Pupils were happy to talk about how much they enjoy their time in school. They are keen to join in. If a pupil struggles to cope, adults are quick to engage with them so that they feel calmer in themselves and do not unsettle other pupils.

The teaching of reading and communication is a priority for the school. Pupils develop a love of reading by listening to lots of different types of stories and rhymes. Pupils successfully use signs, symbols, pictures, technology and words to communicate their thoughts and ideas.

Routines are quickly established in the early years class so that children learn what is expected of them. Teachers are skilled in building learning experiences into many activities throughout the day. Children in the early years showed delight in 'fishing for items' in the class pond as they took part in phonics games outside the classroom.

Staff in the sixth form help students to feel more independent. Students have their own common room, which they value as being a 'grown-up space'. All students work towards accreditation, and teachers continue to consider further accreditation which would reflect the ability of the students as they progress through school. Teachers support students to learn skills and knowledge that will help them to be independent in the community or at work. Students spend time in school, then out of school on environmental and community work to develop their understanding of the community around them. Pupils' personal development is further enriched by many interesting activities and opportunities. The sixth-form students explained how cooking and decorating biscuits and cakes would then help them to raise money in their enterprise lessons.

Inspectors watched pupils taking part in an inter-school rowing competition. Pupils showed great enthusiasm and sportsmanship. Pupils say they enjoy the trips and visits

they take part in. They explained how the visits to local shops and cafes help them to be more confident using money and meeting new people.

Leaders make sure that pupils are ready for the next stage in their education. Most of the pupils go on to appropriate next-steps provision. They gain the skills and knowledge needed to become more independent and confident about themselves.

Governors share leaders' ambition for all pupils to succeed and achieve well. They visit the school regularly and provide effective support and challenge.

Leaders are sensitive to the amount of work that staff do. Staff feel that leaders listen to them and they feel valued by the school leaders. They appreciate the importance that leaders give to their well-being.

The majority of parents have shared their appreciation of the staff's hard work to support their young people.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All appropriate checks are made on staff to establish their suitability to work with pupils. All staff and governors are trained in safeguarding and have regular updates from school leaders. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns. Leaders are tenacious in following up concerns and working with external agencies to keep pupils free from harm. The pastoral care in the school is a strength. Staff ensure that pupils are well looked after and supported. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when out in the community and when online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Governors and leaders need to ensure that the three curriculum pathways they have chosen are effectively implemented in all subjects. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum plans build on pupils' past knowledge and prepare them well for the learning that is to come. It is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken that they are in the process of bringing this about.
- The curriculum is new and subject coordinators and key stage leaders need time to develop the plans to best support all pupils to ensure that they are successfully implemented and are having the intended impact so that pupils know more and remember more in all subjects. Leaders have begun to train and support the teachers so that they can help pupils to learn more.
- Leaders need to continue to develop the understanding and confidence of some staff so that they can understand how to better support those pupils in school who can present with challenging behaviour.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 2–3 March 2016.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114349
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121889
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	228
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	29
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mr Chris Sparks
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Rachel Grimwood
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.durhamtrinity.durham.sch.uk/">www.durhamtrinity.durham.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2–3 March 2016

## Information about this school

- Durham Trinity is a special school that caters for pupils from the age of two to 19 years. It provides for pupils with a range of SEND.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school was using one alternative provision provider supported by the school's own staff for one pupil at the time of this inspection. The school has arranged to educate one further pupil away from the school site.

## Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, middle leaders, teachers and the wider staff in school. We also spoke with the governors and the school's leadership adviser.

- We did deep dives in these subjects: English (with a focus on communication and reading), mathematics, preparation for adulthood and physical education. For each of these subjects, we met with subject coordinators and key stage leaders, visited lessons, looked at a sample of pupils' work and met with pupils to discuss their experience of learning.
- We reviewed documents relating to safeguarding. Staff explained how they kept children safe.
- We met with pupils and observed pupils during social times, at lunchtime and at breaktime.
- We took account of the 17 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the 52 responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Catherine Garton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Moira Banks

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:  
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2020